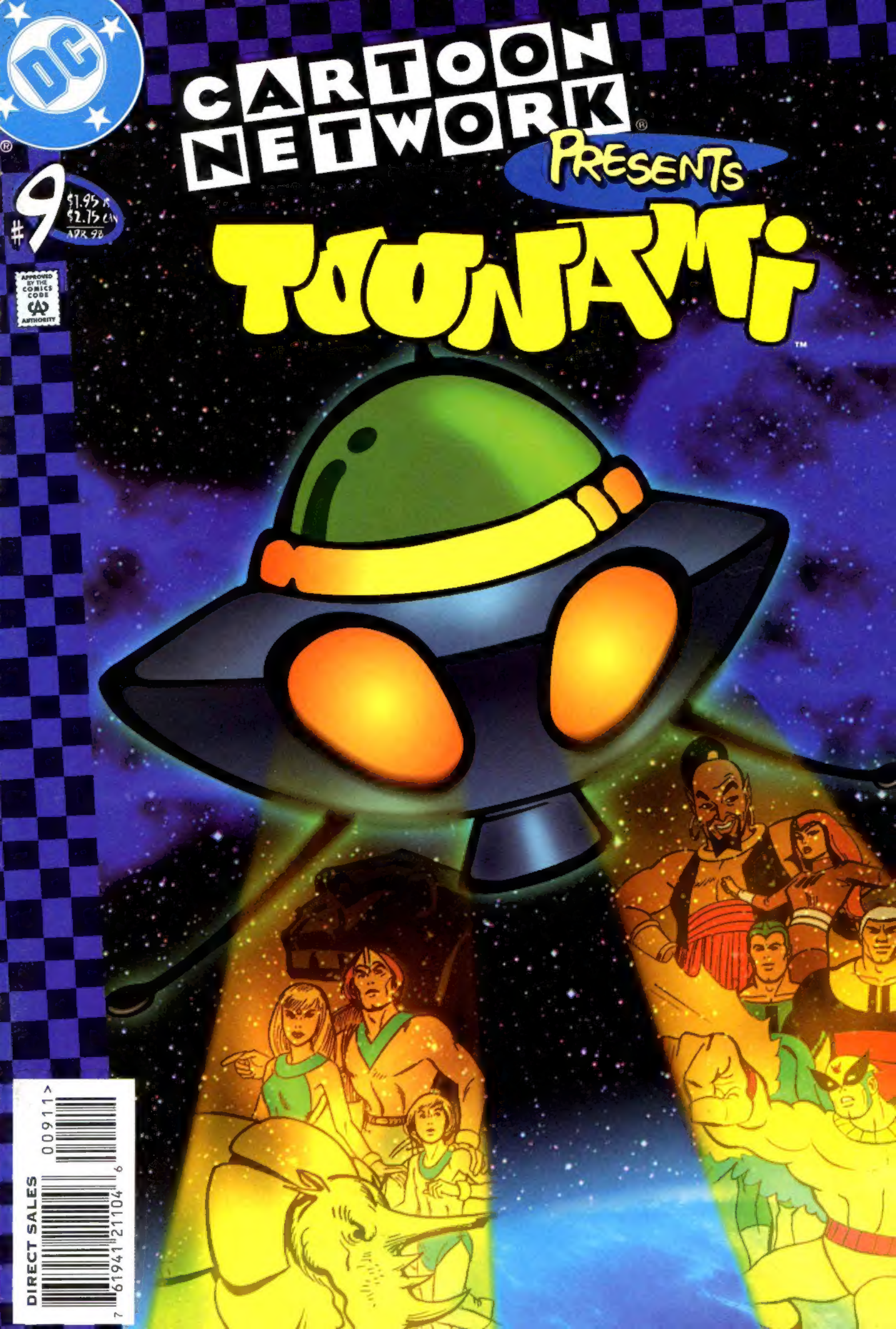
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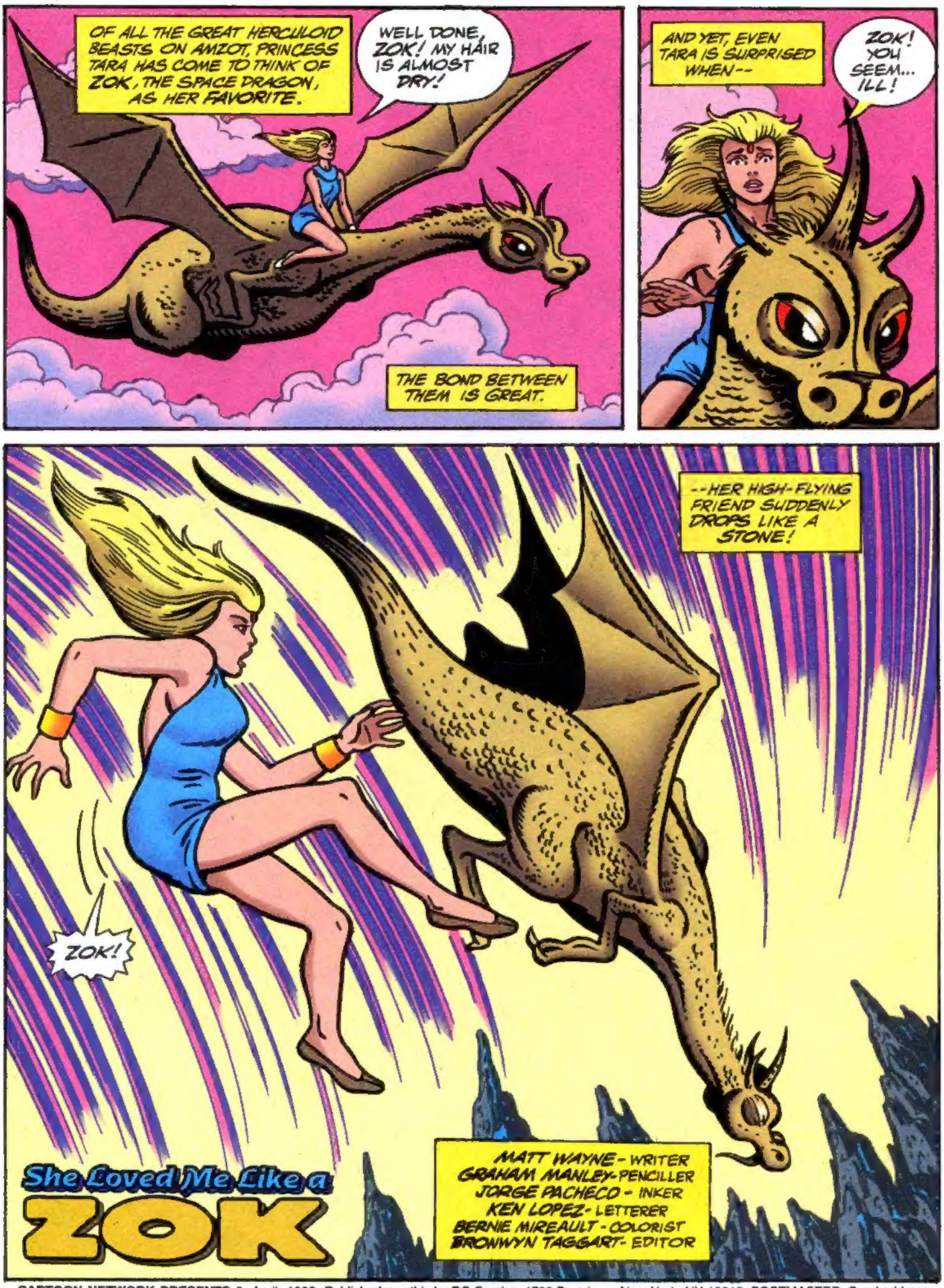
CLYDE!
CLYDE-49! ARE YOU OUT THERE? OUR QUEST FOR INFORMATION MUST CONTINUE.
VREEDLE EET
THERE YOU ARE. WHAT NEW DATA DO YOU BRING?
TWIBBIT! BIDDIDIDDIT!
YES. THE HERCULOIDS.
THE EXPLOITS OF ZANDOR, TARA AND THEIR ARMY OF BIZARRE BEASTS ON THE UTOPIAN JUNGLE PLANET OF AMZOT.
EXCELLENT.


OF ALL THE GREAT HERCULOID BEASTS ON AMZOT, PRINCESS TARA HAS COME TO THINK OF ZOK, THE SPACE DRAGON, AS HER FAVORITE.
WELL DONE, ZOK! MY HAIR IS ALMOST DRY!
THE BOND BETWEEN THEM IS GREAT.
AND YET, EVEN TARA IS SURPRISED WHEN--
ZOK! YOU SEEM... ILL!
--HER HIGH-FLYING FRIEND SUDDENLY DROPS LIKE A STONE!
ZOK!
She Loved Me Like a ZOK
MATT WAYNE - WRITER
GRAHAM MANLEY - PENCILLER
JORGE PACHECO - INKER
KEN LOPEZ - LETTERER
BERNIE MIREAULT - COLORIST
BROWNYN TAGGART - EDITOR

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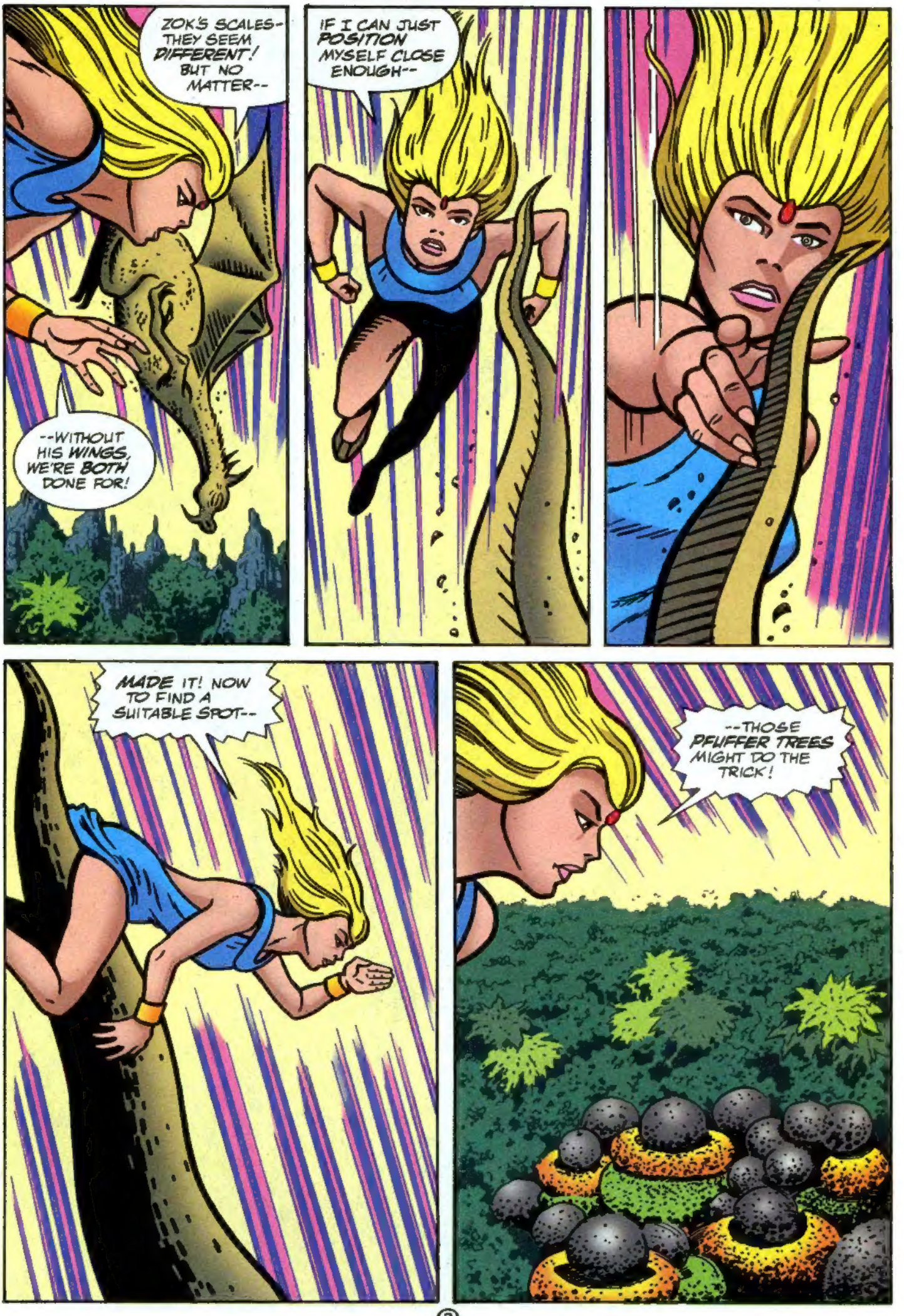
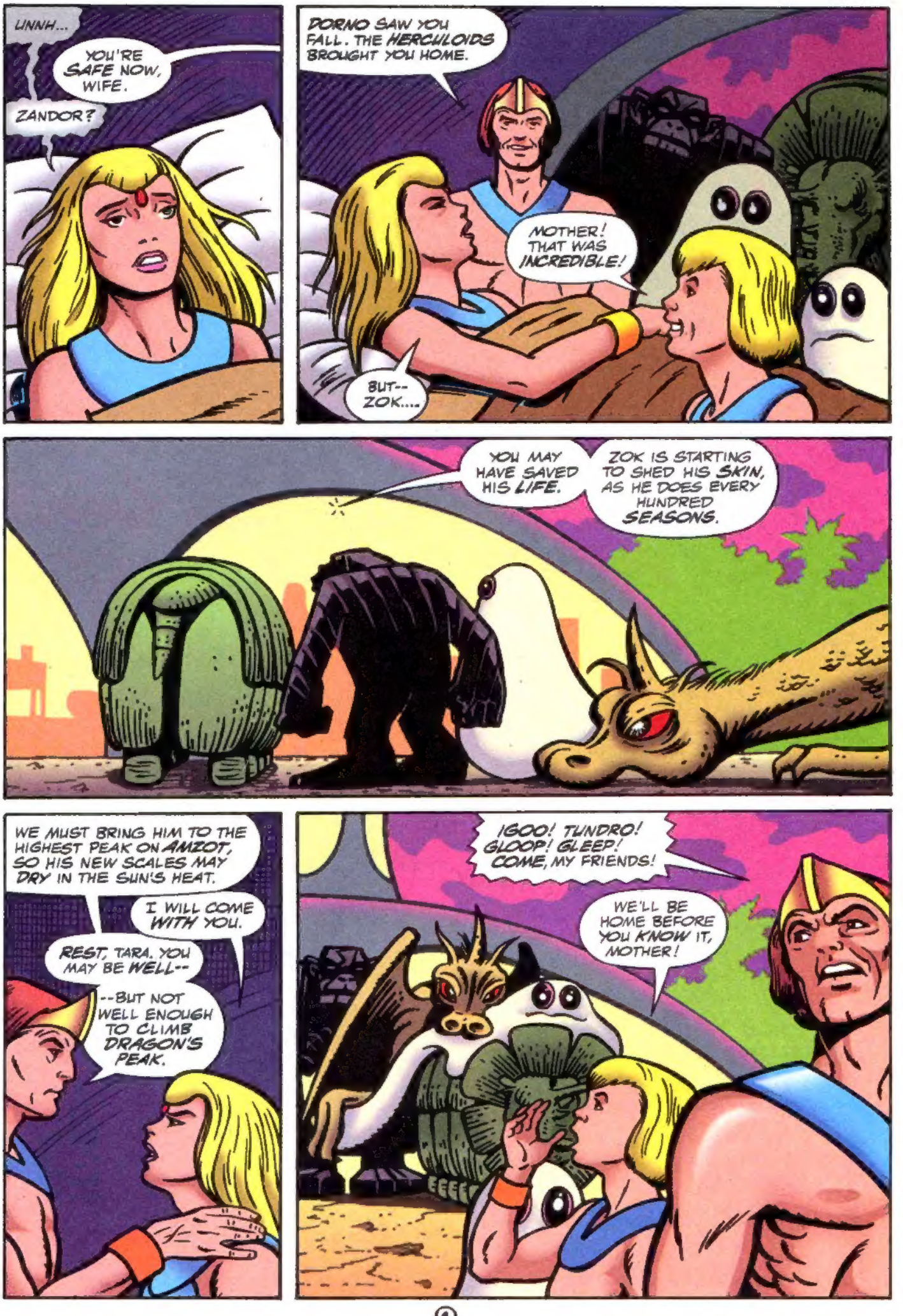
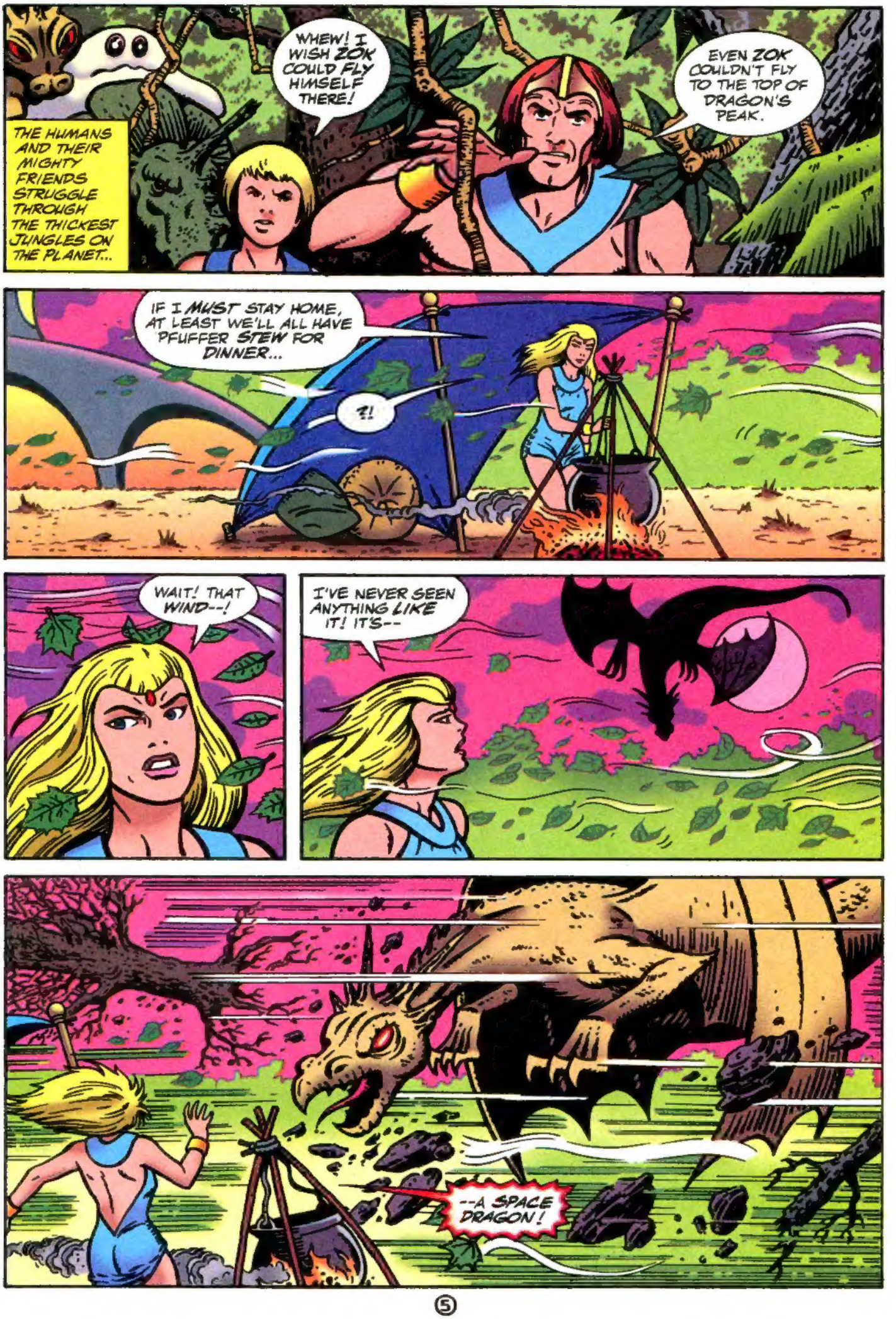
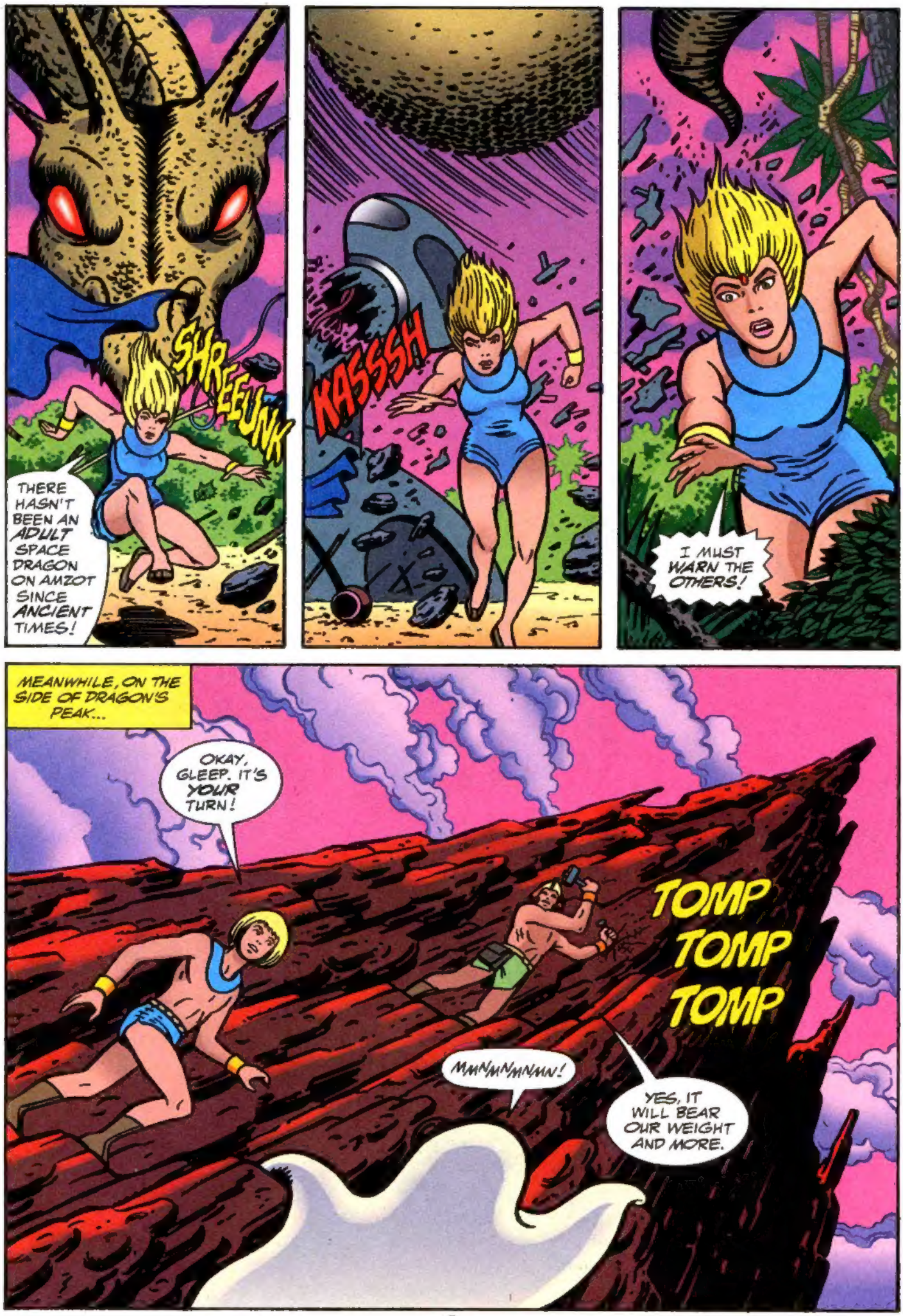
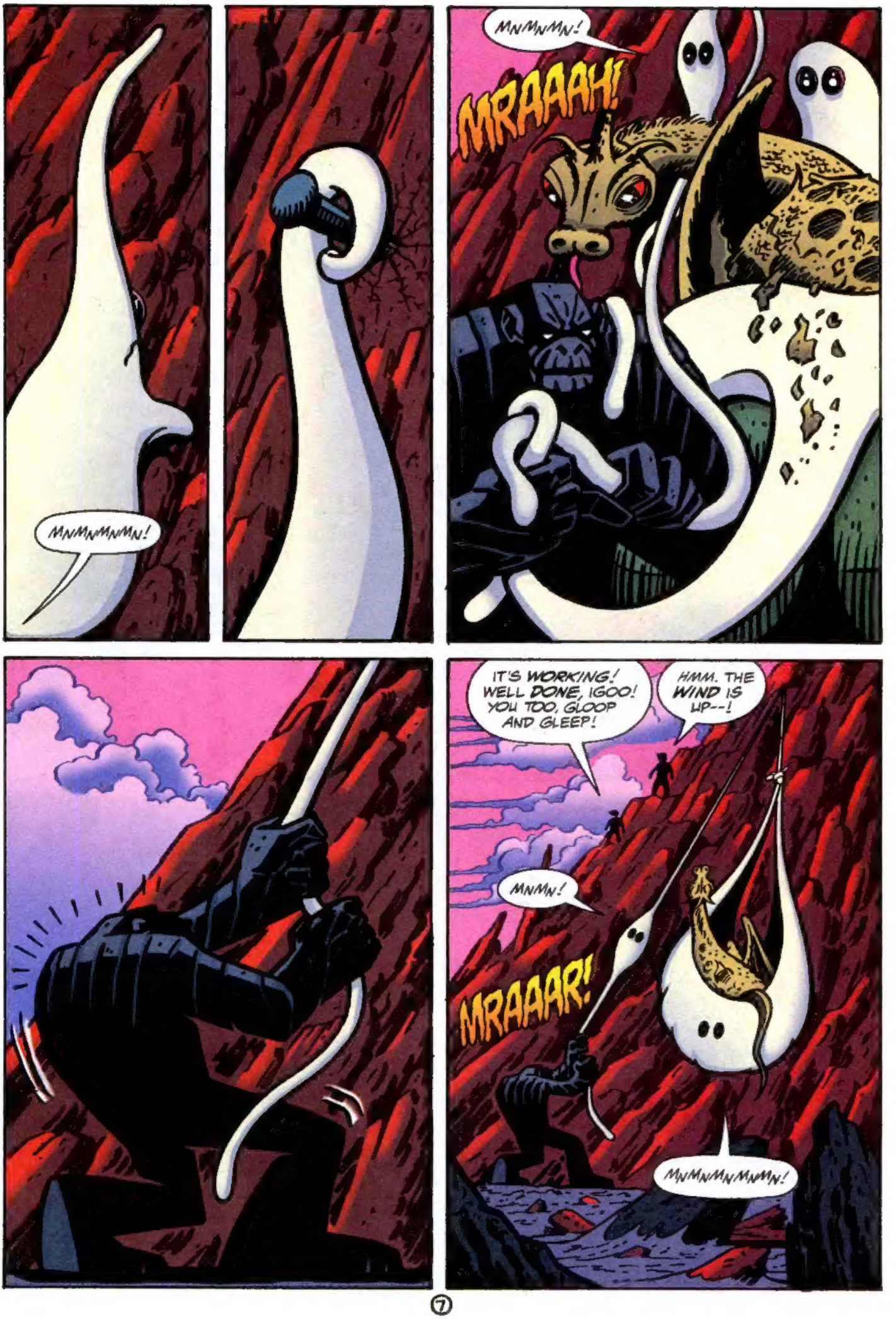

ZOK'S SCALES-- THEY SEEM DIFFERENT! BUT NO MATTER--
--WITHOUT HIS WINGS, WE'RE BOTH DONE FOR!
IF I CAN JUST POSITION MYSELF CLOSE ENOUGH--
MADE IT! NOW TO FIND A SUITABLE SPOT--
--THOSE PFUFFER TREES MIGHT DO THE TRICK!

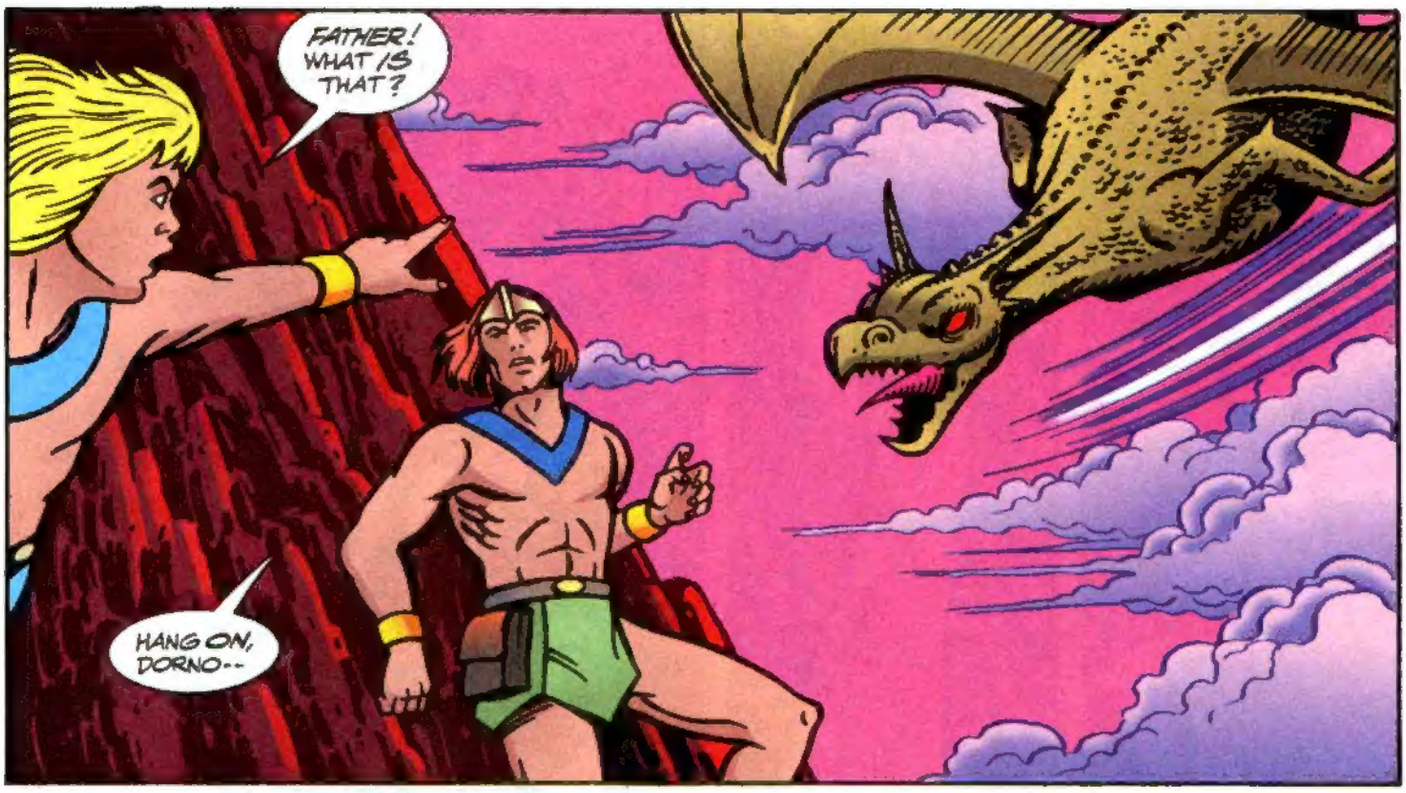
IF I'M RIGHT, I CAN STEER US TO SAFETY.
ZOK! IF YOU CAN EVEN HEAR ME, OLD FRIEND--
--WISH ME LUCK!
PFOOMPF

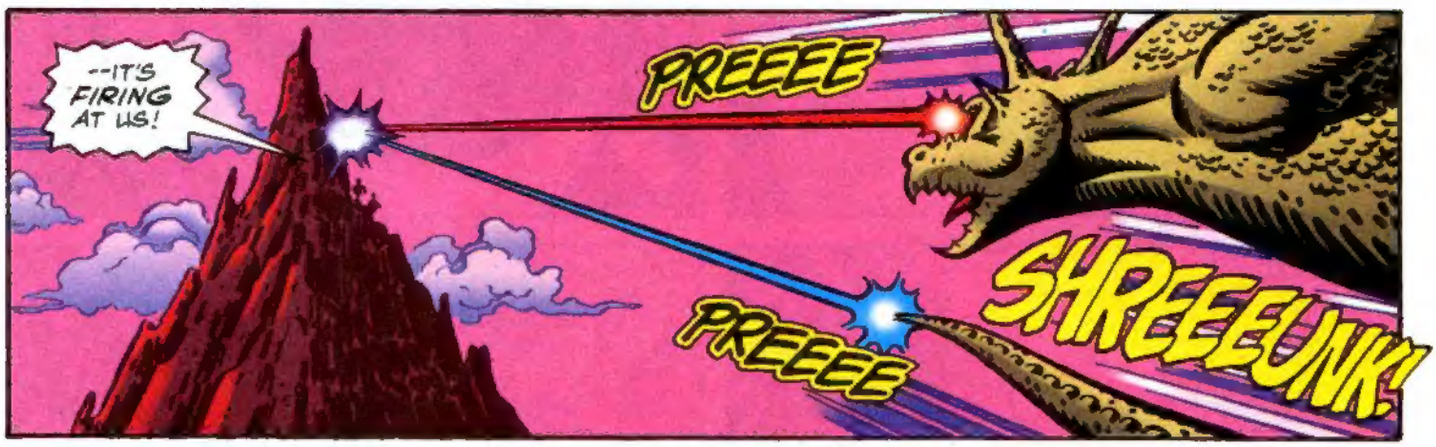

UNNH...
YOU'RE SAFE NOW, WIFE.
ZANDOR?
DORNO SAW YOU FALL. THE HERCULOIDS BROUGHT YOU HOME.
MOTHER! THAT WAS INCREDIBLE!
BUT-- ZOK....
YOU MAY HAVE SAVED HIS LIFE.
ZOK IS STARTING TO SHED HIS SKIN, AS HE DOES EVERY HUNDRED SEASONS.
WE MUST BRING HIM TO THE HIGHEST PEAK ON AMZOT, SO HIS NEW SCALES MAY DRY IN THE SUN'S HEAT.
I WILL COME WITH YOU.
REST, TARA. YOU MAY BE WELL--
--BUT NOT WELL ENOUGH TO CLIMB DRAGON'S PEAK.
IGOO! TUNDRO! GLOOP! GLEEP! COME, MY FRIENDS!
WE'LL BE HOME BEFORE YOU KNOW IT, MOTHER!


THE HUMANS AND THEIR MIGHTY FRIENDS STRUGGLE THROUGH THE THICKEST JUNGLES ON THE PLANET...
WHEW! I WISH ZOK COULD FLY HIMSELF THERE!
EVEN ZOK COULDN'T FLY TO THE TOP OF DRAGON'S PEAK.
IF I MUST STAY HOME, AT LEAST WE'LL ALL HAVE PFUFFER STEW FOR DINNER...
?!
WAIT! THAT WIND--!
I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT! IT'S--
--A SPACE DRAGON!


SHREEUNK
THERE HASN'T BEEN AN ADULT SPACE DRAGON ON AMZOT SINCE ANCIENT TIMES!
KASSSH
I MUST WARN THE OTHERS!
MEANWHILE, ON THE SIDE OF DRAGON'S PEAK...
OKAY, GLEEP. IT'S YOUR TURN!
TOMP TOMP TOMP
MMMMMMMM!
YES, IT WILL BEAR OUR WEIGHT AND MORE.

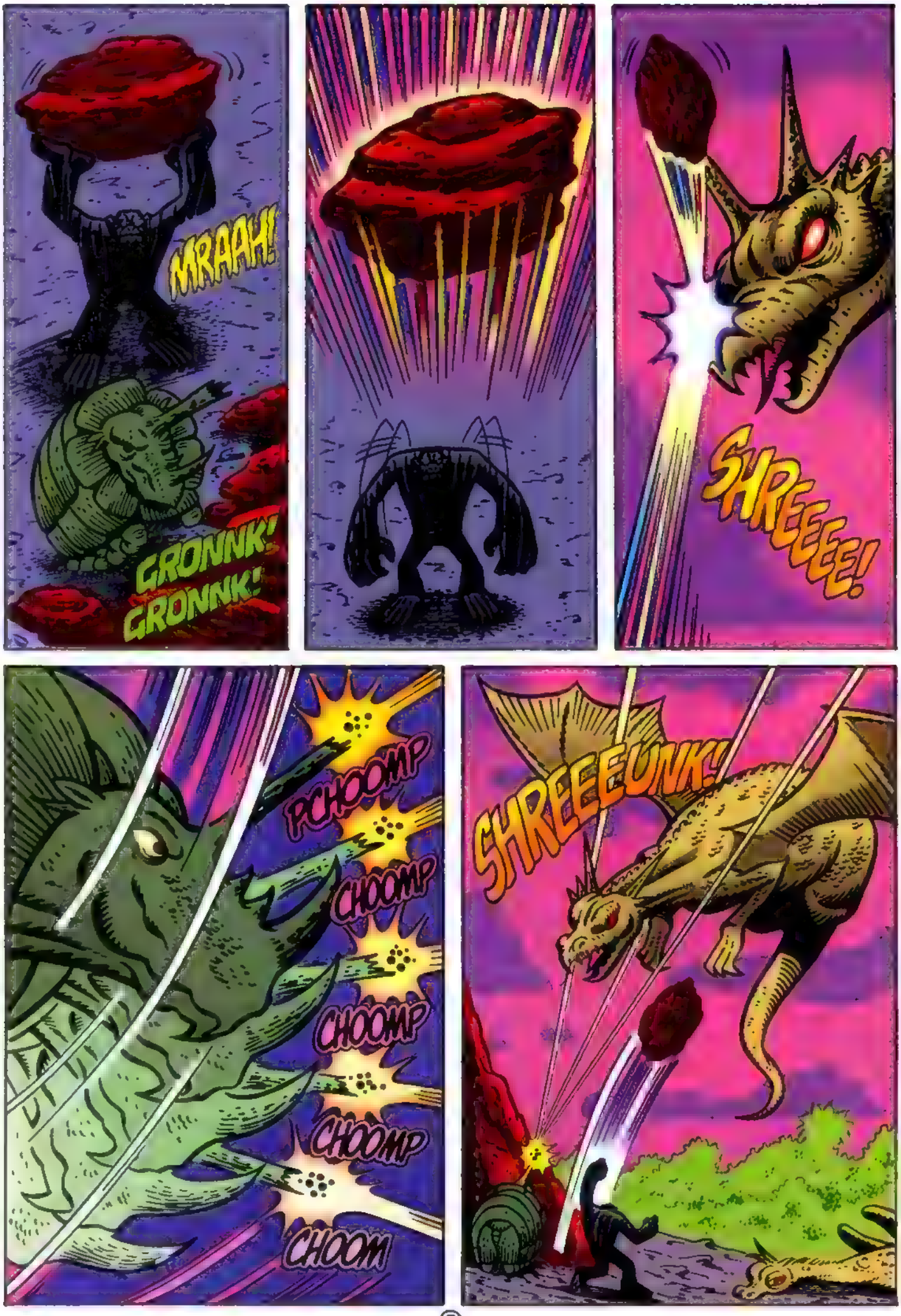

MNMNMNMN!
MNMNMNMNMN!
MRAAAH!
IT'S WORKING! WELL DONE, IGOO! YOU TOO, GLOOP AND GLEEP!
HMM. THE WIND IS UP--!
MNMN!
MRAAAR!
MNMNMNMNMNMN!

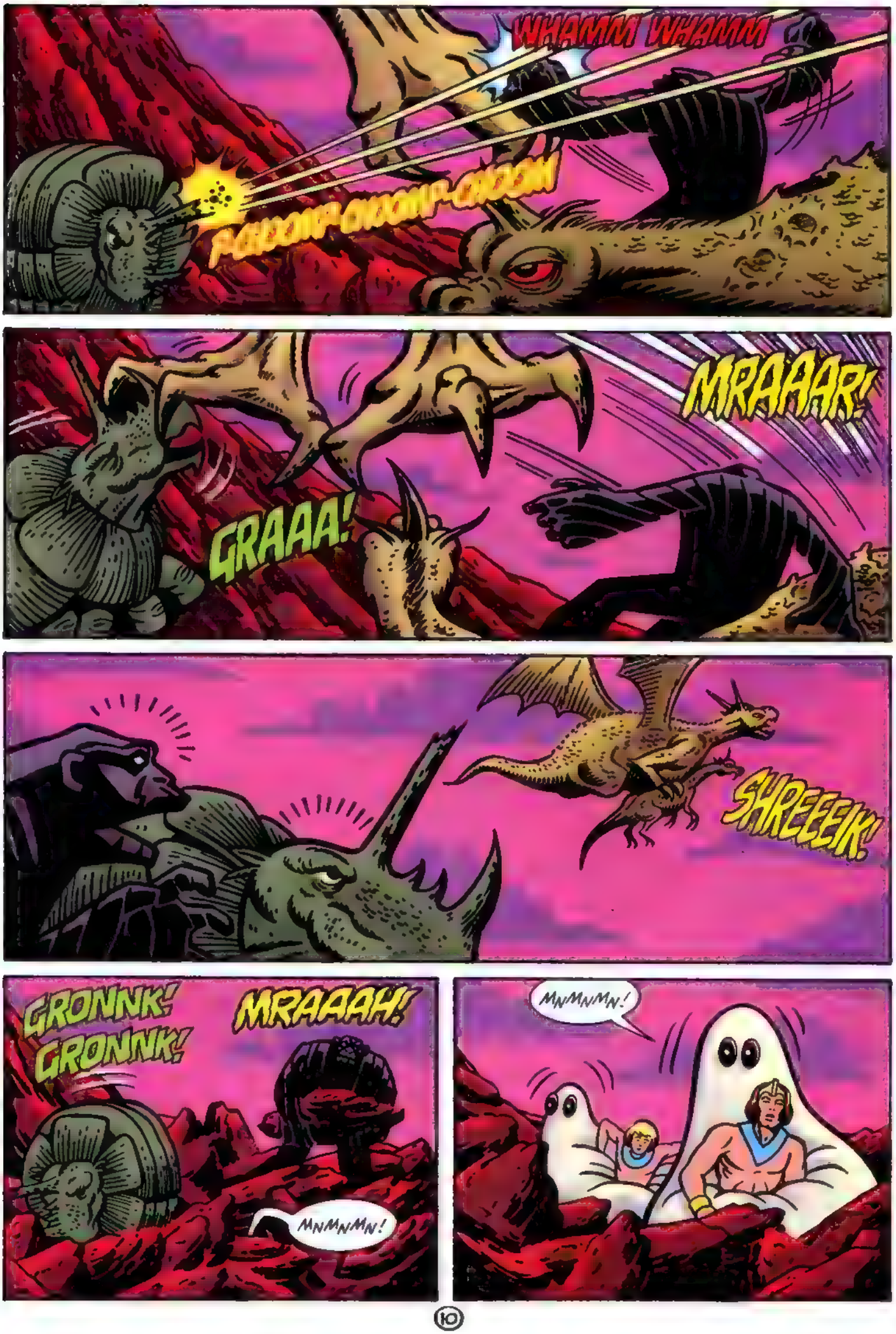

FATHER! WHAT IS THAT?
HANG ON, DORNO--

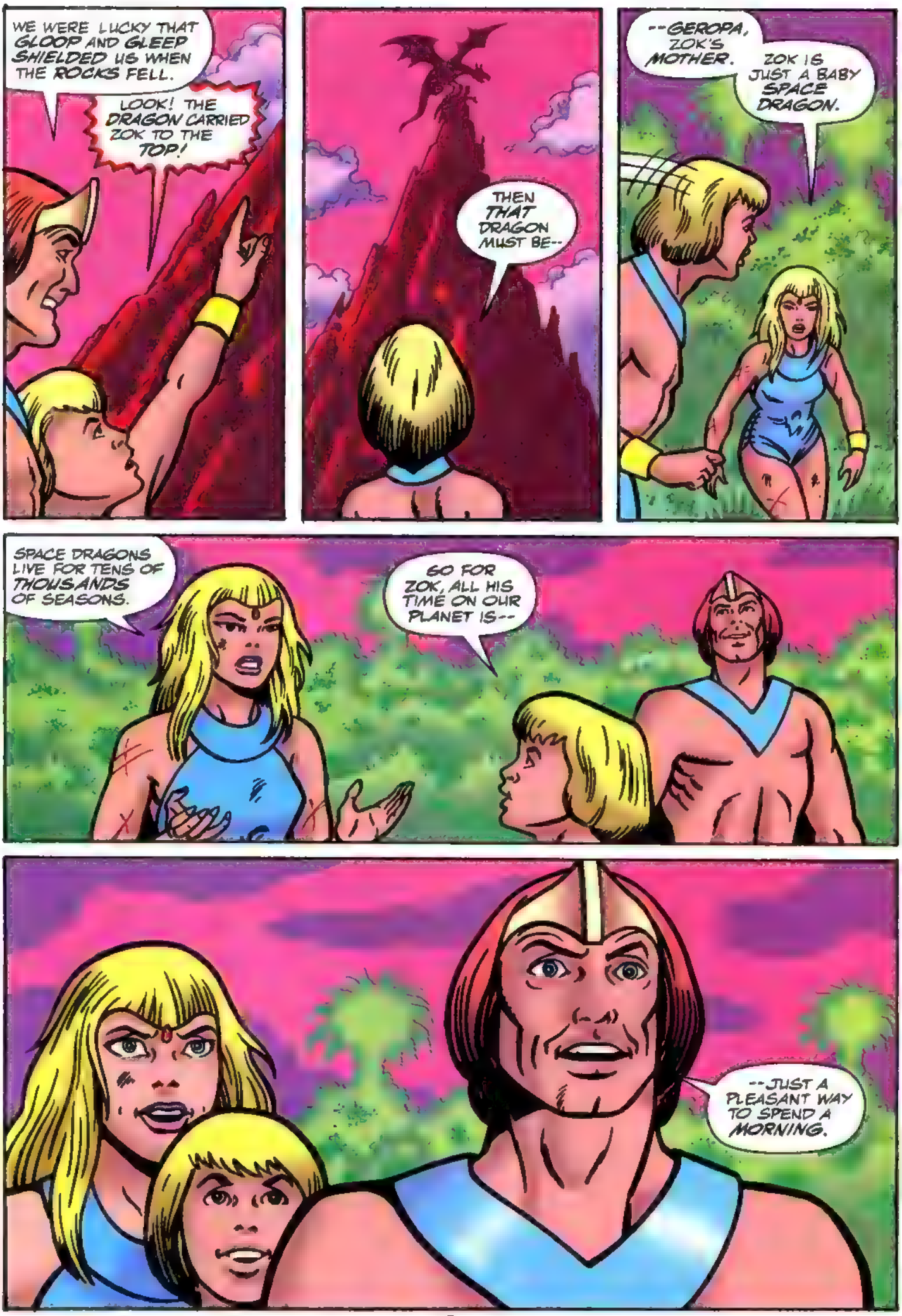

--IT'S FIRING AT US!
PREEEE
PREEEE
SHREEEUNK!

CHOOM

GRONK!
MRAAAH!
FATHER--!


MRAAH!
GRONNK! GRONNK!
SHREEEEE!
PCHOOMP
CHOOMP
CHOOMP
CHOOMP
CHOOM
SHREEEUNK!

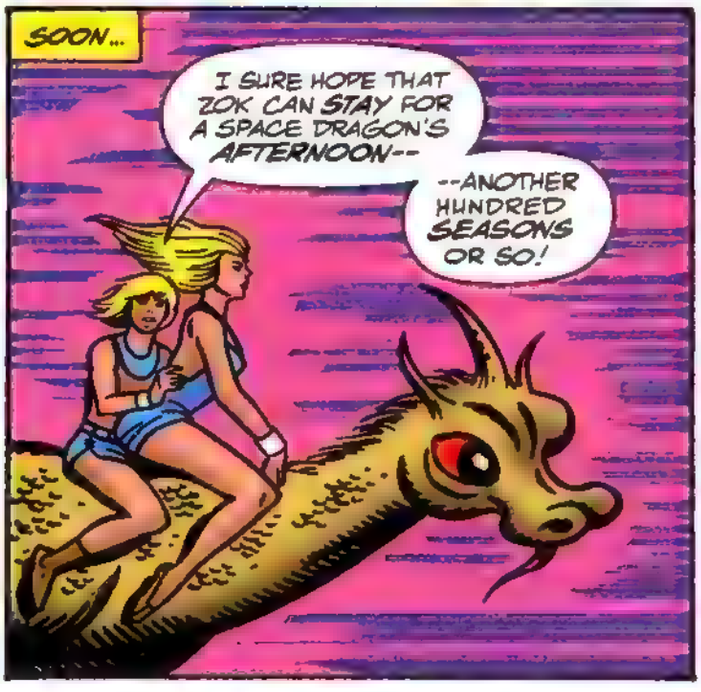

WHAMM WHAMM
KABOOM-OMOOM-OMOOM
MRAAAR!
GRAAA!
SHREEEIK!
GRONNK! GRONNK!
MRAAAH!
MNMNMN!
MNMNMN!

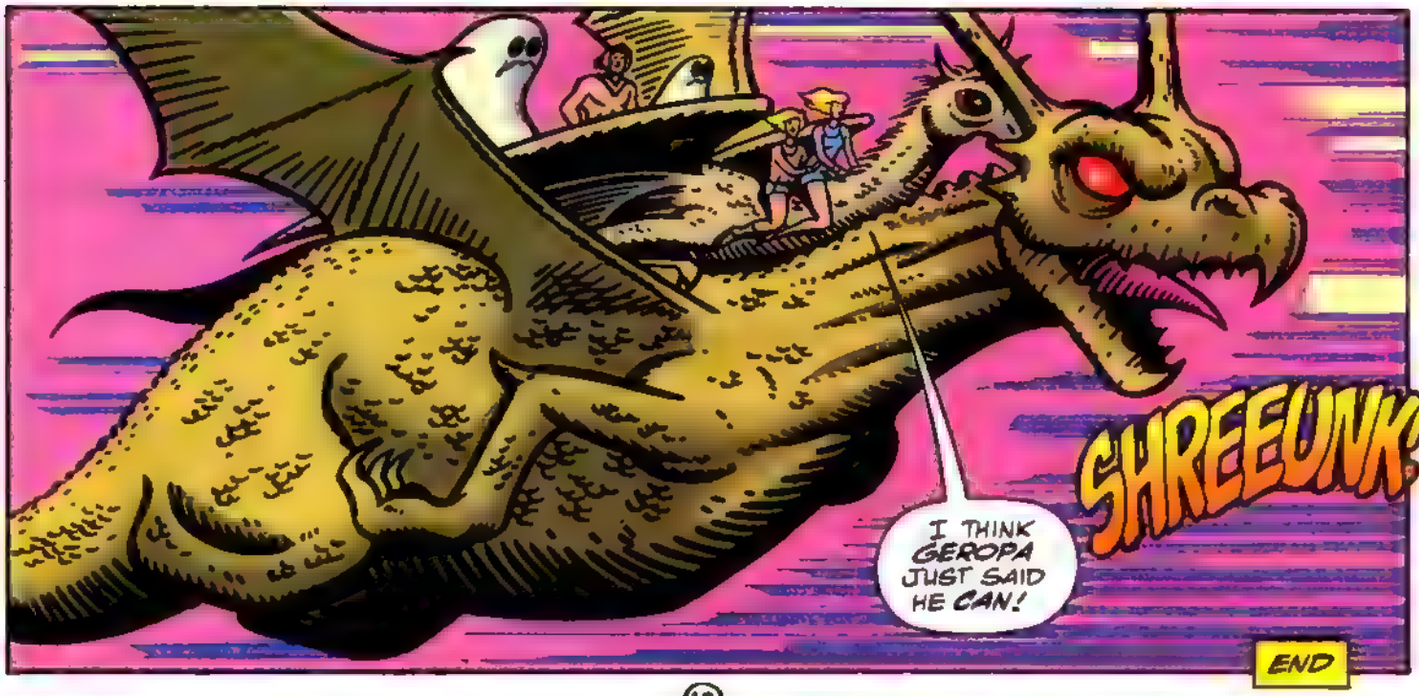

WE WERE LUCKY THAT GLOOP AND GLEEP SHIELDED US WHEN THE ROCKS FELL.
LOOK! THE DRAGON CARRIED ZOK TO THE TOP!
THEN THAT DRAGON MUST BE--
--GEROPA, ZOK'S MOTHER.
ZOK IS JUST A BABY SPACE DRAGON.
SPACE DRAGONS LIVE FOR TENS OF THOUSANDS OF SEASONS.
SO FOR ZOK, ALL HIS TIME ON OUR PLANET IS--
--JUST A PLEASANT WAY TO SPEND A MORNING.

"HIS MOTHER WAS NEARBY, JUST IN CASE SHE WAS NEEDED--

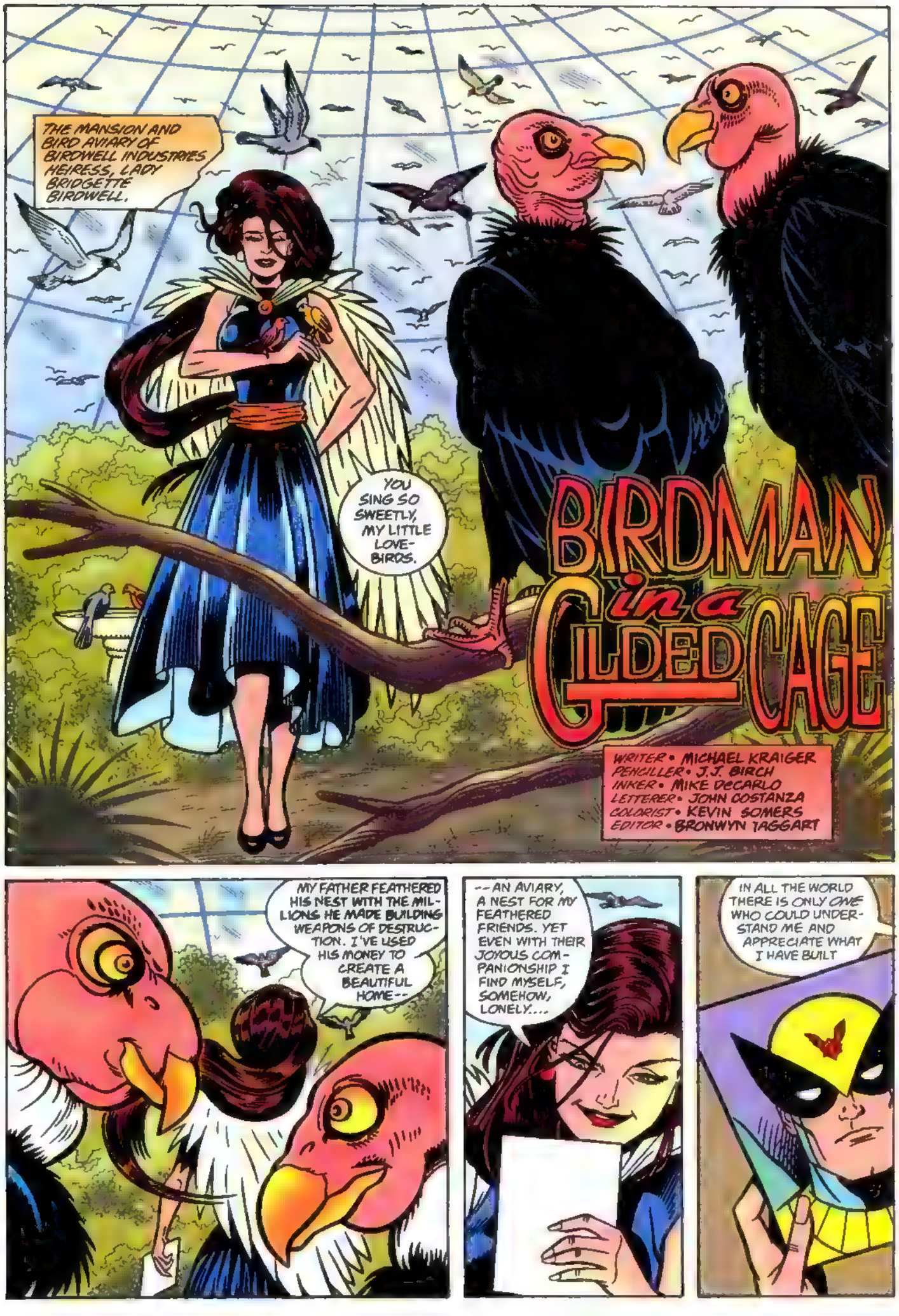
"--BUT TO A SPACE DRAGON, 'NEARBY' MAY BE A NEARBY STAR."

GRONK! GRONNK!
HERE SHE COMES AGAIN!
EASY, TUNDRO. BY NOW, GEROPA WILL KNOW THAT WE ARE FRIENDS.

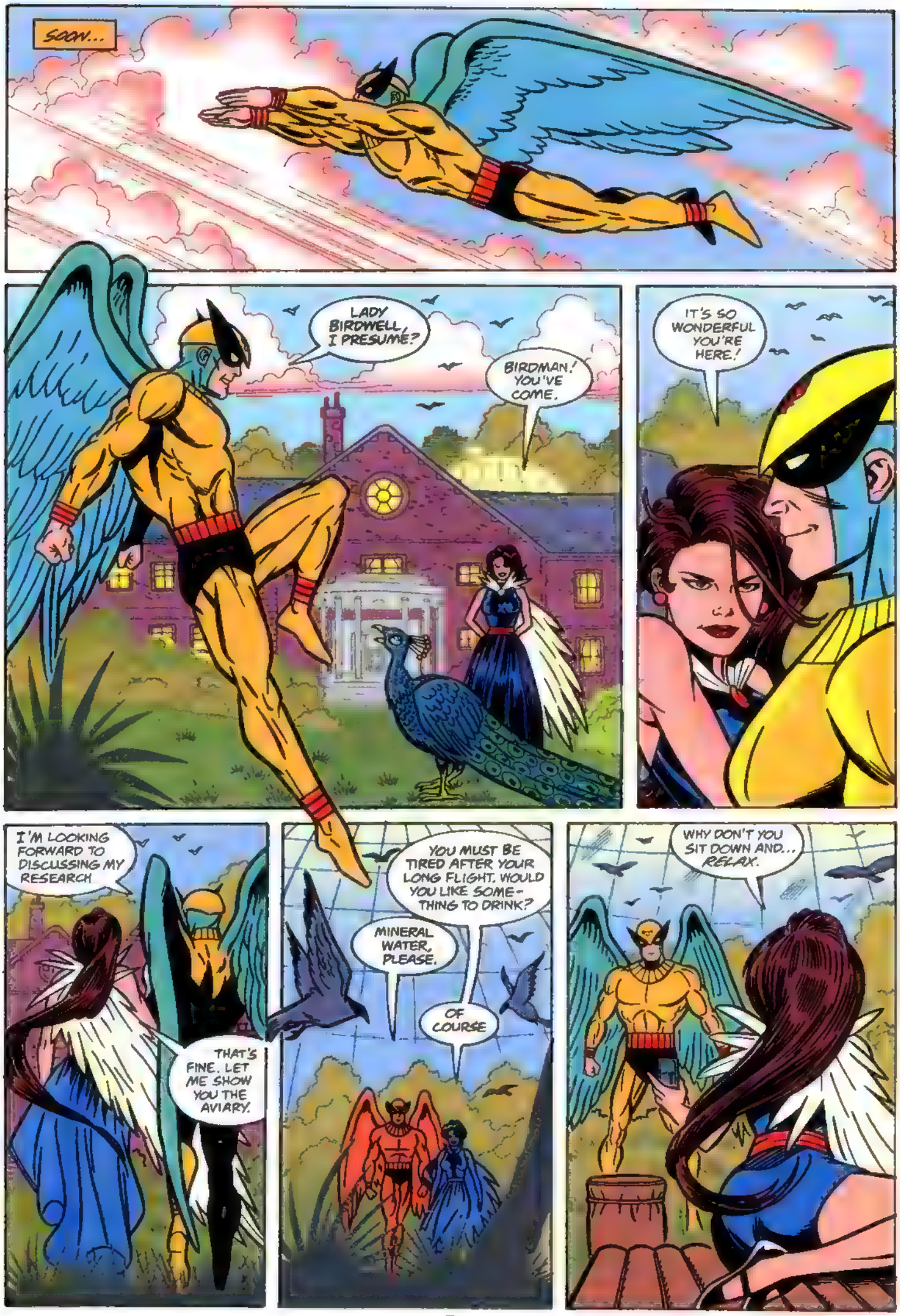

SOON...
I SURE HOPE THAT ZOK CAN STAY FOR A SPACE DRAGON'S AFTERNOON--
--ANOTHER HUNDRED SEASONS OR SO!


SHREEUNK!
I THINK GEROPA JUST SAID HE CAN!
END

NOW THAT ZOK'S MOTHER IS THE HERCULOIDS' FRIEND, PERHAPS SHE WILL HELP THEM REBUILD THEIR DWELLING.
THAT WAS VERY ENJOYABLE, CLYDE. THE HERCULOIDS ARE NOW MY FAVORITE CARTOON.
VREE!
YOU HAVE SOMETHING ELSE TO SHOW ME? YOU SERVE ME WELL, MY ORBITING SATELLITE.
TWEE-TWEE--TWEEEEOO!
PERHAPS THIS NEW CARTOON WILL SHOW ME A TREND.
DEEDLE-EEDLE-EET!
BIRDMAN? WORDS FAIL ME.


THE MANSION AND BIRD AVIARY OF BIRDWELL INDUSTRIES HEIRESS, LADY BRIDGETTE BIRDWELL.
YOU SING SO SWEETLY, MY LITTLE LOVE-BIRDS.
BIRDMAN in a GILDED CAGE
WRITER • MICHAEL KRAIGER
PENCILLER • J.J. BIRCH
INKER • MIKE DeCARLO
LETTERER • JOHN COSTANZA
COLORIST • KEVIN SOMERS
EDITOR • BRONWYN TAGGART
MY FATHER FEATHERED HIS NEST WITH THE MILLIONS HE MADE BUILDING WEAPONS OF DESTRUCTION. I'VE USED HIS MONEY TO CREATE A BEAUTIFUL HOME--
--AN AVIARY, A NEST FOR MY FEATHERED FRIENDS. YET EVEN WITH THEIR JOYOUS COMPANIONSHIP I FIND MYSELF, SOMEHOW, LONELY....
IN ALL THE WORLD THERE IS ONLY ONE WHO COULD UNDERSTAND ME AND APPRECIATE WHAT I HAVE BUILT

DAYS LATER, AT THE MOUNTAIN HEADQUARTERS OF BIRDMAN...
BECAUSE OF YOUR CONTINUED EFFORTS, BIRDMAN, THERE ARE NO MATTERS WHICH CURRENTLY REQUIRE YOUR ATTENTION. PERHAPS YOU SHOULD LOOK AT THIS AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO RELAX--OVER.
JUSTICE CAN NEVER RELAX, FALCON 7. FOR THE SAKE OF WORLD SAFETY, I MUST REMAIN EVER VIGILANT. BIRDMAN OUT.
HMM SNIFF: WHAT'S THIS?
A PERFUMED INVITATION TO SPEAK ON THE SUBJECT OF ORNITHOLOGY.
The Birdwell Institute of Ornithology
Conference on Avian Issues
April 7-10
Birdwell Manor
Fulchester
You are invited to present a summary of recent research
THIS COULD PROVE TO BE RELAXING, AS WELL AS GIVING ME A CHANCE TO SPEAK ABOUT MY LATEST RESEARCH.


SOON...
LADY BIRDWELL, I PRESUME?
BIRDMAN! YOU'VE COME.
IT'S SO WONDERFUL YOU'RE HERE!
I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO DISCUSSING MY RESEARCH
THAT'S FINE. LET ME SHOW YOU THE AVIARY.
YOU MUST BE TIRED AFTER YOUR LONG FLIGHT. WOULD YOU LIKE SOMETHING TO DRINK?
MINERAL WATER, PLEASE.
OF COURSE
WHY DON'T YOU SIT DOWN AND... RELAX.

THE ENORMOUS WEALTH LEFT ME BY MY FATHER HAS ENABLED ME TO COLLECT SOME OF THE WORLD'S RAREST BIRDS.
CREATING A HOME FOR THEM HERE HAS BEEN MY LIFE'S WORK. BUT NOW I FIND MY LIFE LACKING A CERTAIN... SOMETHING --
HADN'T WE BETTER PREPARE FOR MY LECTURE?
I MUST CONFESS, BIRDMAN, THERE WON'T BE ANY LECTURE. THERE ISN'T A BIRD-WATCHING SOCIETY. I ONLY WANTED YOU HERE FOR MYSELF!
I- I DON'T UNDERSTAND. PERHAPS IT'S BEST IF I GO... ER... MATTERS OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE--
I WAS HOPING YOU'D STAY OF YOUR OWN ACCORD--
-- BUT YOU'RE LIKE MY OTHER PRECIOUS GUESTS. YOU MUST FIRST BE CAPTURED BEFORE YOU'LL COME TO ACCEPT THIS AS YOUR HOME.

THIS CAGE WON'T HOLD ME! WHY, BY MERELY USING MY SOLAR-POWERED BLASTS--
YOUR SOLAR POWER WILL CEASE TO EXIST AFTER I COVER YOUR CAGE WITH MY NIGHT-SHADE!
CLAP CLAP
VICTOR! VICTORIA!
THIS MATERIAL WAS ONE OF MY FATHER'S MOST BRILLIANT INVENTIONS, DEVELOPED FOR MILITARY USE. IT COMPLETELY BLOCKS AND ABSORBS ANY TYPE OF LIGHT.
UNGH! MY SOLAR-POWERED BLASTS ARE USELESS! THIS MATERIAL'S ABSORBED ALL MY SOLAR ENERGY.
FEELING WEAK. MUST... TRY TO CONTACT AVENGER USING... SONIC LOCATOR...
I THINK YOU WILL COME TO LIKE IT HERE, BIRDMAN. IN TIME, YOU'LL COME TO UNDERSTAND--
--THAT WE WERE MEANT TO BE TOGETHER, SOARING THROUGH THE SKY, COURTING THE CLOUDS.

A FEW HOURS LATER...
NOW TO TAKE A LOOK AT YOUR WONDERFUL WINGS. MY FATHER WASN'T THE ONLY BRILLIANT SCIENTIST IN THE FAMILY.
SQUAK!! AW-AWW
CHIRP! CHIRP!
SQUAK! CHEEP!
SOMETHING IS UPSETTING THE OTHER BIRDS IN MY FLOCK.
I CAN ONLY HOPE MY SIGNAL GOT THROUGH TO AVENGER.
CHIRP!
SQUAK!
CHEEP!
TWEET, TWEET!
RESPONDING TO BIRDMAN'S SONIC SIGNAL, THE MIGHTY EAGLE AVENGER CIRCLES THE SKY ABOVE THE AVIARY.
THE FRIGHTENED BIRDS IN THE AVIARY BELOW WARN OTHERS OF THEIR KIND ABOUT THE CIRCLING PREDATOR.
SHREEK!
TRAINED TO ACCOMPLISH WHAT NO OTHER BIRD WOULD DARE, AVENGER HOMES IN ON THE SOURCE OF BIRDMAN'S DISTRESS SIGNAL.
VICTOR! VICTORIA! GET HIM!
CHIRP!
SQUAK!
CHEEP!
AW-AWW
AW-AWW
CHEEP!
AAA
LICK!

WHOOOSH!
RAAA!!
RAAUK!
RAAA!!
AVENGER?!
NOW TO DEAL WITH THAT FOUL TEMPT-RESS!
A SHORT TIME LATER...
IN ADDITION TO UNLAWFUL IMPRISONMENT, WE'RE CHARGING LADY BIRDWELL WITH SMUGGLING AND POSSESSION OF SEVERAL SPECIES OF ENDANGERED WILD BIRDS.
THE NEXT DAY, AT BIRDMAN'S HEADQUARTERS...
IT LOOKS AS THOUGH YOU GOT SOME SUN ON YOUR VACATION, BIRDMAN!
YES, AND NOT A MOMENT TOO SOON! RIGHT, AVENGER?
RAAA!!
THE END

PERHAPS LADY BIRDWELL IS BETTER OFF THIS WAY. HER COMPULSION FOR BIRDS WAS UNHEALTHY.
CLYDE?
TOOT HONK PWEET!
I MUST HAVE MORE!
THE MORE YOU SHOW ME, THE GREATER MY APPETITE FOR ENTERTAINMENT!
DEEDLE EEDLE-EET!
"NEXT TIME"? I CAN HARDLY WAIT!

LETTERS

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Hey! *We* ***got*** *your letters — like this:*

Chris Geesey
Cheyenne, WY

Dear *"Cartoon Network Presents,"*

Hi. My name is Chris and I am a Cartoon Network watcher and comic book collector, so your comics really fit in. It's weird to know that you don't have any letters so far, and I wonder whether nobody likes to send letters or that I am the only one reading. Anyway, I wanted to let you know that there *are* people out there reading so you don't feel like you're wasting a lot of money on a big bomb. In fact, I hope you keep printing your comic until I am 92. *[Chris didn't say how old he is, but from his handwriting we're guessing he's a kid. — Editor Bronwyn]*

Anyway, I have some questions: Whatever happened to "Monkey" and "The Justice Friends" on "Dexter's Laboratory"? Will they get their own show? Will some junky old cartoons like "Speed Racer" be in the comic book? Why did you switch to DC Comics? Well, I got to go. I hope to see this comic in the stands for years to come.

▼

Curt Vodehnal
York, NE

Editor Bronwyn,

I can't believe by issue #4 of *Cartoon Network Presents* you didn't have any letters. I hope this doesn't mean people aren't reading these great comics, because I think they're among the best in the industry today! They are great for young readers, and adults who grew up with these characters should love them too! I know I do. (I'm 26.) I especially love *CNP* because there are different characters in each issue. I loved Dexter in *CNP* #1, and "Dial M for Monkey" had me in hysterics! (I'd never seen him before.) However, I'd like to see the focus on more classic characters. I love the stories where classic characters interact, like "Savage Animal Fury" in #4, or the support group for befuddled humans in #3 — it was a scream! Keep up the great work on all the Cartoon Network comics! I hope these comics are a great success! Good luck!

▼

Darin DeWitt
Fremont, CA

Dear Bronwyn T.,

I hate to hear you haven't received a single letter. I didn't bother because generally no one gives a [care] about anything readers write, but maybe you will!

***Cartoon Network Presents* is, in my opinion, the best comic book to come out with these characters. I love how you guys publish even the more obscure characters like Top Cat, Wally Gator, Snagglepuss, and Magilla Gorilla. While they are not *that* obscure, no one seems to care about great characters like this anymore. The Dexter issue was great with a Top Cat backup, but I need more Top Cat. I was pretty mad 'cause on Cartoon Network Asia they get Top Cat every night in prime time and repeated the following morning. On Cartoon Network USA they cut Top Cat mid-summer!**

I love the work you guys are doing, and I am looking forward to the next Toonami issue. Whoever thought of that as a way to link the *Herculoids* and *Birdman* deserves a pat on the back. Could you keep doing interviews or give the history behind the Hanna-Barbera characters in the comic book? I find them quite interesting, and worth the comic book by themselves!

Keep up the good work preserving the classic characters!

Dear Chris, Curt, and Darin: It looks like great minds think alike! Thanks for your concern, guys, but don't worry — Ms. Tracy Bowen, DC's Manager of Newsstand Circulation, tells us that ***Cartoon Network Presents*** *is doing fine. We definitely plan on being around for a while. (Yay!) Chris, we don't actually know what the Network plans for Monkey or Justice Friends. We'd like to ask Darin, since he knows all about programming on Cartoon Network* ***Asia*** *so maybe he would know, but we don't want to bother him at home. And we can't imagine why you would ever call* ***Speed Racer*** *a "junky old cartoon." (Editor Bronwyn* ***lives*** *for the scenes where Spridal and Chim-Chim have those candy bacchanals: "Mmmm... Candy!") But we don't have the rights to put* ***Speed Racer*** *in* ***CNP*** *anyway so, no, you won't be seeing it here. As for why Cartoon Network comics are being produced and published by DC — it's 'cause* ***we rule supreme!*** *And yes, Darin, we* ***do*** *care what our readers think, so thanks to all three of you for taking the time to write.*

Hey! *Chris, Curt, and Darin did it, now it's your turn to write to us! Send your letter to* **Cartoon Network Presents *Letters*** *and we might print it. We also might edit it for length, and we might print any drawings you send but we won't be able to send them back to you. (Our lawyer wanted us to tell you that.)*

NEXT MONTH

Cow and Chicken go to a carnival where the sideshow barker looks just like the Red Guy. While Cow is accidentally winning a blue ribbon, Chicken signs on for a sideshow job — with the geek! EEK!

This month's cover was created entirely on computer by Mr. Simon Erich, and it ***rocks.***

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DRAGONS

A dragon is a *mythical* animal that's usually described as having the body of a snake, the wings of a bat, a lion's claws, and a head like a crocodile's. So it looks pretty much like a big, scaly lizard except that it's usually **spitting fire and guarding *treasure*.**

Stories about dragons are very old, and show up in legends and folklore from all over the world. Dragon-like monsters are described in myths from ancient Egypt, Babylon, and Canaan, and there are references to dragons in the Bible, too. (There's the dragon Leviathan in Psalms, Isaiah, and Job, and the red dragon of Satan in the book of Revelations.) Stories about gods and heroes fighting dragons were also featured in Greek and Roman mythology. The story of the Roman hero Hercules' battle with the dragon Draco is the reason **there's a constellation named** Draco **up in the sky near the Big Dipper.**

About a thousand years after the Romans, dragon tales were still popular in Europe. In Norse mythology there's a dragon called the Lindwurm that guards the treasure of the Rheingold and gets killed by the hero Siegfried, and the early English hero Beowulf died fighting a treasure-hoarding dragon. By the time of the Middle Ages there were a *bunch* of stories about Christian saints overpowering dragons, including Saint George, who supposedly saved a princess from a dragon that wanted to eat her.

It's interesting that in all the European legends the dragon is something scary and bad; dragons are monsters that the heroes have to fight. But in China and Japan, where there are also lots of ancient dragon myths, **dragons are *good*.** Asian dragons are still supposed to be strong and powerful, yet they're also friendly and bring wealth and good luck to people.

But in *all* the dragon legends in *all* of history, there's *never* been a baby space dragon — until now with the *Herculoids* and the story of Zok. Like the dragons in Asian mythology, Zok is friendly and uses his strength to help Tara, Dorno, and Zandar in their primitive existence on the planet Amzot.

Why have so many people told stories about dragons? No one's really sure, but all over the world people in ancient times associated dragons, snakes, and other reptiles with their religious beliefs. People believed in dragons just as much as any other reptile, too. They didn't know dragons were made up; they thought dragons were ***real*.**

For a while some people thought that the myths of dragons came from early people's memories of the time when there were dinosaurs on the earth. But now we know that dinosaurs died off thousands and thousands of years before there were any humans, so that's not very likely.

Maybe the dragon legends come from people's experiences with other, real reptiles such as the **Komodo dragon.** Okay, it's *called* a dragon, but it's really just a big monitor lizard that lives on Komodo Island in Indonesia. Komodo dragons can grow to be 10 feet long and can weigh 300 pounds. They kill and eat deer, wild boar — and sometimes *people*. Most reptiles eat by swallowing smaller animals whole, but Komodo dragons use their long claws and sharp teeth to tear off hunks of flesh to eat. They're big, and they're mean, and they're **scary.** It doesn't have bat's wings, but otherwise the Komodo dragon looks pretty much like the traditional legendary dragon — **except it doesn't breathe fire, and it's got NO treasure at all.**

WHAT'S UP?

By BRONWYN T.